

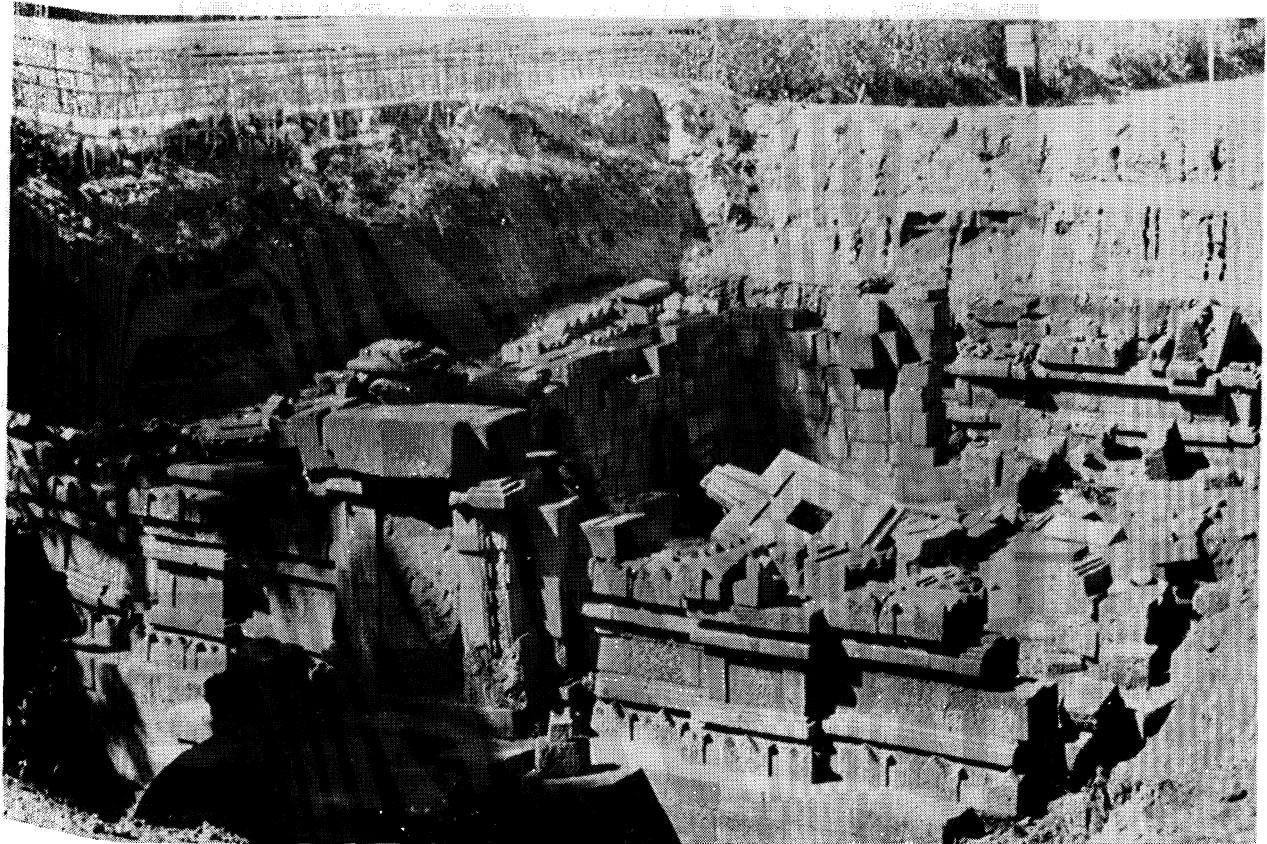


Close-up of mud-filled doorway with *makara* ornamentation and roughly cut lintel. Photo: George McT. Kahin, 1967.

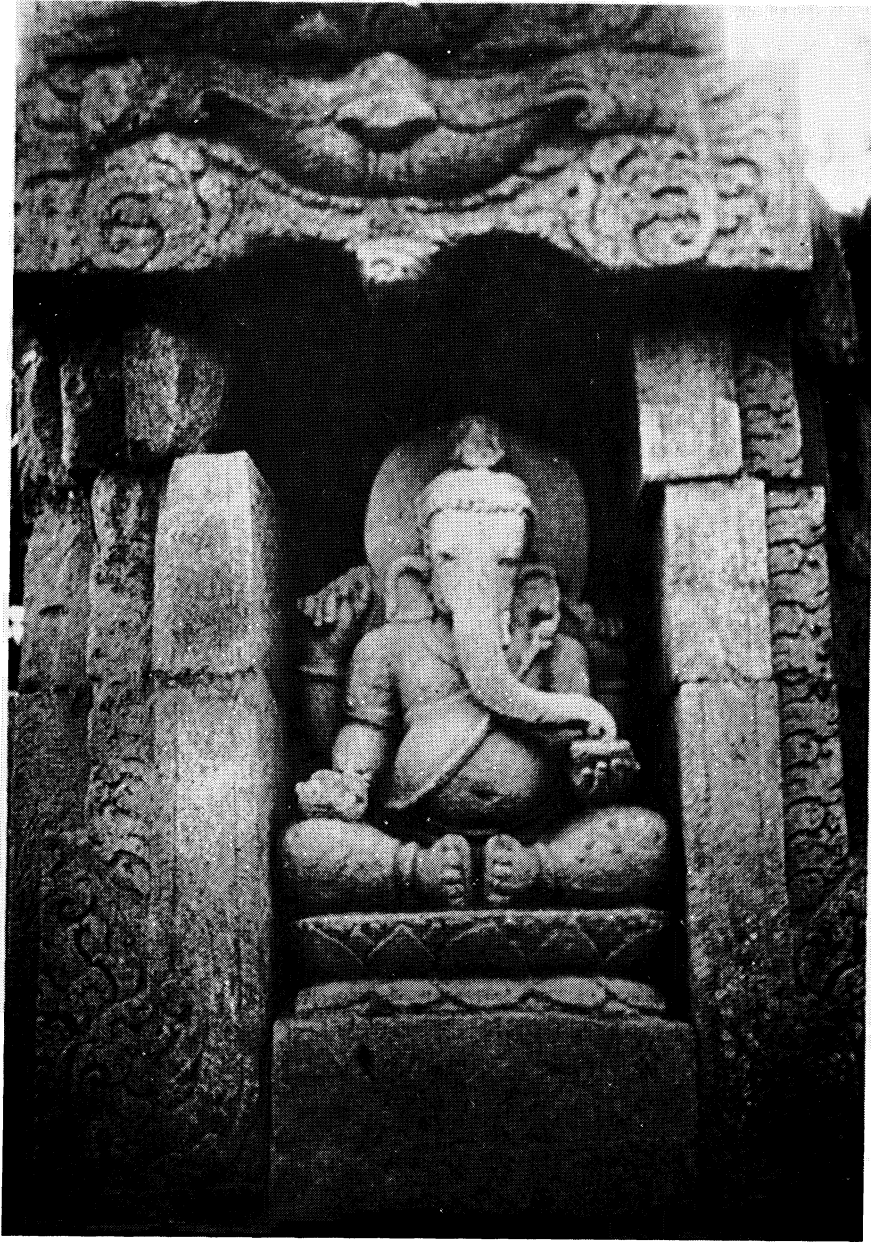
PRELIMINARY NOTE ON TJANDI SAMBISARI:  
A Recently Discovered Temple  
in Central Java

Sri Kusumobroto

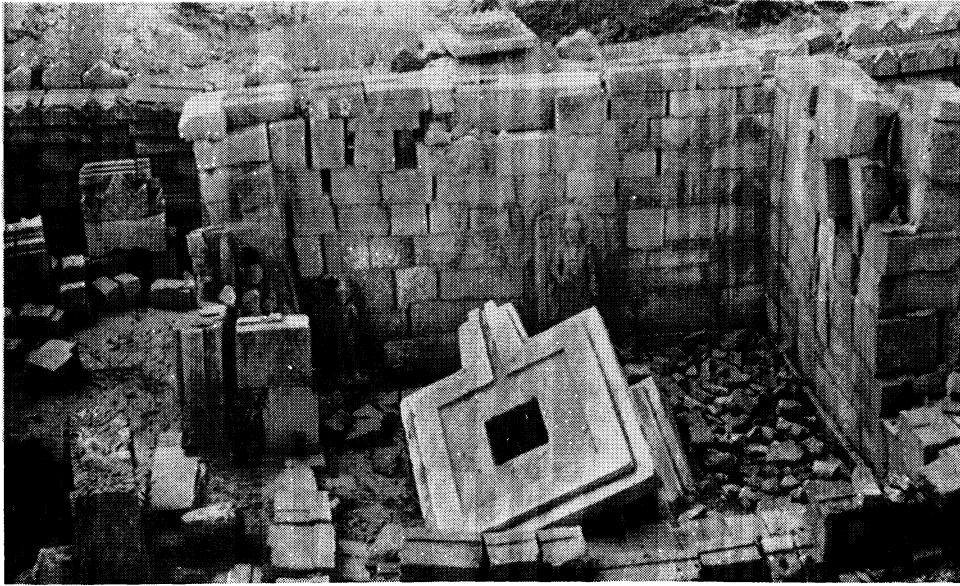
One early morning in the summer of 1966, a rice cultivator of the village Sambisari, situated several miles northeast of Jogjakarta, broke the blade of his plough which struck a stone. Upon closer examination of the stone, the man discovered that it was not an ordinary natural piece of rock, but that it was cut and resembled stones he had seen at the sites of temples in the Prambanan plain. He had the good sense to take the stone to the branch office of the National Archaeological Institute maintained at the Prambanan temple complex.



View of excavated ruin of Tjandi Sambisari seen from southwest. Inside the cella, toppled yoni; doorway still filled with mud. Photo: Elizabeth Graves, 1967.



Ganesha image in eastern niche, crowned with partly preserved *makara* motif. Photo: George McT. Kahin, 1967.



Close-up of inner chamber seen from the south. Against the inner back wall, image of Mahaguru (center) and a door guardian to the left. Photo: Elizabeth Graves, 1967.

A preliminary excavation soon led to the conviction that there must be some structure or a part of one buried under the rice field. Mr. Sudiman, Head of the Prambanan office and also Lecturer at the Department of Archaeology of Gadjah Mada University in Jogjakarta, obtained permission from the central office in Djakarta to enlist the help of Gadjah Mada University students (3rd year and up) to proceed with the digging. By September 1966 the plans had matured and work could be started in the beginning of that month. Teams of twenty students each, took turns, each team working one week, and after one month the ruin of what proved to be a Shivaite temple came to light.

The floor of the temple lies about 5 meters (14 feet) under the surface of the rice field. The structure had been covered with mud and sand. Volcanic ash was found in the bottom layers. A large portion of the structure had collapsed, but a substantial part of its walls was still standing and even the doorway was still intact. Its lintel showed as yet uncarved curving surfaces undoubtedly intended to become the sculptured monstrous Kala head which usually surmounts temple portals and niches.

In the middle of the temple's inner chamber a yoni was lying on its side and a lingga lay nearby. Also a square stone casket was found there. It evidently had already been displaced and was empty. The lid was missing. The inside of the casket had traces of ashes.

The images which once stood in the outside niches had fallen out but were still in good condition. A Durga Mahisasuramardini--tallest of the figures, ca. 4 feet high--belonged to the northern



niche; a Ganesha--ca. 3 feet high--to the niche facing east; and on the south side, the niche held the figure--smallest of the three--of Shiva Mahaguru. This arrangement is similar to that of the Shiva temple of Prambanan with the difference however that in the central cella of the latter stands an image of the god Shiva and not of his lingga, and that the Sambisari temple in contrast to Prambanan's Shiva Temple faces West and not East.

Two other figures, of small--perhaps 20 inches high--door guardians (*dwarapala*) which belong to either side of the doorway have also been found near the temple. They are about 18 inches high. The larger images vary in style and execution. The figure of the Durga, though roughly cut, has a beautiful slender shape; the Ganesha figure is of excellent workmanship and finish; the smaller Mahaguru is cruder in execution.

The ornamentation on the outer walls is held in flat relief. On the west wall, south of the doorway, there is a particularly lovely motif of the Tree of Life (*kalpataru*).



Photo: George McT. Kahin, 1967.

The niche facing East, i.e., the niche in the temple's back wall which as usual harbors the Ganesha image, has retained its fine *kala-makara* frame.

As far as can be judged so far, it should be possible to restore the whole temple as most of the stones of the parts that had collapsed, and especially of the upper part of the structure, seem to be present. It is a relatively small sanctuary whose original height may not have exceeded 15-18 feet. It is not clear, however, whether Tjandi Sambisari was a single, isolated structure or whether it may have been a part of a larger temple complex. Only further exploratory excavations will make it possible to answer this question.